indicated during the above-mentioned discussion that data may be submitted if Applicants agreed that a *prima facia* case of obviousness was set forth by the Office. However, Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facia* case of obviousness has not been presented for the following reasons.

Tanaka et al. disclose, at best, an intermediate transfer belt that may contain an elastic layer having a JIS-A hardness of 85°C or less and at least one covering layer formed on the elastic layer which has a relative permittivity and thickness of less than or equal to 6 and greater than or equal to 6 μm, respectively. The above-mentioned parameters that are required by the disclosure in Tanaka et al. are a result of the very detailed analysis provided therein at columns 5-7, as well as their utilization of equations 3 and 5 and the data of Figures 5 and 6 therein. In order to achieve their very specific goals, Tanaka et al. specify that their cover layers must be applied and coated on the elastic layer (see column 4, lines 12-17; column 8, lines 7-13; Figure 1 and Figure 2; and column 12, lines 41-43). Therefore, Tanaka et al. provides an internal elastic layer having coated thereon at least one covering layer to which toner is directly applied and transferred onto an intended surface.

Clearly, Tanaka et al. fails to disclose or suggest, and at the very least teaches away from, an intermediate transfer belt containing a first belt layer having a hardness ranging from 30 to 70°C as measured by the JIS A scale and a second belt layer having a thickness ranging from 30 to 1,000 μm where the first belt layer is the elastic surface belt layer on the second belt layer which is a base layer.

In direct contrast, the present invention relates to an intermediate image transfer belt containing a first belt layer that has a hardness ranging from 30 to 70°C as measured by the JIS A scale and a second belt layer having a thickness ranging from 30 to 1,000 μm (see amended Claims 49 and 73). Further, the intermediate belt layer is formed by providing a

first endless belt layer on the inside of a mold and containing a cured first raw material; and also, by forming a second belt layer containing a second liquid material that is fed into the mold while the mold is being rotated and cured (see amended Claims 49 and 73). Inherent in these steps by which the claimed first and second layers are formed within the above-mentioned mold, is a resultant claimed belt made therefrom that is depicted and exemplified by Figure 5 of the present invention. It is clear that the first belt layer, e.g. the elastic surface layer (101), is on the outside of the belt, while the second belt layer, e.g. the base layer (102), is on the inside of the belt. Therefore, the orientation of the belt layers in the present invention provide a first elastic surface layer on a base inner second layer where the elastic surface layer may have a toner directly applied thereto and transferred therefrom onto an intended surface.

In light of the above, it is clear that Tanaka et al. fail to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. In fact, Tanaka et al. teach away from the claimed invention because they disclose that the elastic layer is coated by at least one covering layer, thereby providing a covering layer on the elastic layer. In direct contrast, the elastic surface layer (first belt layer) of the present invention is on the base layer (second belt layer) of the transfer belt which is inherent to the claimed process by which the first and second layers are applied and constructed. More specifically, the claimed invention provides an elastic layer on the outside of the base layer so that toner may be applied to the elastic surface layer and transferred to an intended surface. Therefore, the claimed invention has a structure that is in exact opposite to that is disclosed and taught by Tanaka et al. Accordingly, Tanaka et al. cannot possibly disclose or suggest the claimed invention; and withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

DVS based on Fig 1 of Tanaka

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested. Should anything further be required to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

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